

From the Office of  
SENATOR HENRY M. JACKSON (D., WASH.)

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STATEMENT ON CIA RESOLUTION

by

Senator Henry M. Jackson

(On the Floor of the Senate)

I wish to support Senator Russell's motion to have this resolution from the Committee on Foreign Relations -- proposing the creation of a Committee on Intelligence Operations -- referred to the Committee on Armed Services. I believe this is the best way to handle this matter under present circumstances.

As must be evident to everyone, the free world needs intelligence activities to assure the survival and success of liberty. Intelligence is as important as armed strength.

Obviously, also, intelligence operations are instruments of national policy. They should be subject to continuing and effective higher review and coordination within the Executive Branch. And under our Constitution, the intelligence agencies -- given government power to exercise and granted public funds to expend -- should be subject to continuing and effective monitoring by the Congress.

Intelligence activities understandably present special problems for surveillance by the Congress. Intelligence organization strives to be tight and centralized, and to the greatest possible extent anonymous -- and this is the way it should be. Moreover, public statements involving sensitive intelligence ought to be made only on the responsibility and under the control of the President, for public revelation of sensitive intelligence both jeopardizes the normal conduct of national security policy and compromises the sources of vital intelligence.

It goes without saying that intelligence information must be closely held in the Congress, just as it is in the Executive Branch. The basic principle of intelligence is "need to know" -- and this principle applies throughout the government.

The issue that concerns the Senate today is not the denial to members of Congress of substantive intelligence information to which they are entitled in the performance of their legislative responsibility. Of course members of Congress have a right to receive -- and as a matter of fact are now able to -- the substantive intelligence information that concerns problems in which they are interested within the jurisdiction of their committees.

Rather what we are talking about today relates to the most sensitive area of intelligence -- the sources and methods by which intelligence information is acquired. It is of first importance that in this most delicate area of intelligence operations, the number of Congressmen involved should be limited to what is necessary to meet the essential requirements of Congressional surveillance. The more people involved the greater the difficulty of protecting highly sensitive information and the larger the risk of those inadvertent disclosures and leaks that compromise our intelligence efforts and are dangerous to national security.

In my judgment we are following a sound course by limiting the jurisdiction in this regard to the two key committees most concerned -- the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Appropriations. Once we start adding committees for the purpose of surveillance the list must expand beyond Foreign Relations to other committees, just to mention two others -- the

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Joint Atomic Energy Committee, which in order to make wise decisions in the nuclear weapons field needs to know what the adversary is doing and therefore must depend heavily on intelligence information and is necessarily concerned with its reliability; and the Aeronautical and Space Sciences Committee, which is also dependent to a great degree on trustworthy intelligence data.

It is clear, therefore, that if we follow the logic of this resolution from the Committee on Foreign Relations, we would end up doing violence to the fundamental principle that knowledge of the most highly sensitive areas of the intelligence operation must be confined to a very small number according to a strict interpretation of "need to know."

No process of auditing and review is perfect and there may be useful changes that can be made. But sometimes it is wiser to leave a basic arrangement alone, make the most of it, and adapt it slowly and deliberately in the light of experience. I believe that is the way we are really likely to move forward in this area.